

## MESSAGE FROM SUPERINTENDENT JOHN SCAVELLI

There have been many wonderful activities and events occurring at all of our schools since our last issue.

Spring concert season is upon us, and our schools have been holding their vocal and instrumental concerts over the last couple of months. A special thank you to all the students and their teachers. Their hard work and enthusiasm is reflected in each performance.

March was an exceptionally busy month. One of the big events at the beginning of March was “Read

Across America Day”. Many of our schools were fortunate to have special guest readers from around the community. All of our first-grade students across the district had the opportunity to partner with Cherokee High School students, again this year, for a Read Across America literacy event.

Our schools across the district celebrated School Wellness Week during the week of March 11. Daily theme days for the week included lessons on food & nutrition, health & fitness, safety, and emotional well-being. This was a great opportunity for our schools to promote the health and well-being of our students. During this week, in addition to special Wellness

Wednesday activities that took place during the school day, the second annual District Wellness Night was held in the evening. This event featured various health experts from the schools and community who focused on fitness activities, healthy eating, and overall health & well-being. The district’s therapy dogs also attended and focused on reducing anxiety towards reading and building empathy for animals. More than 200 attended. It was a great success.

At the end of the month, middle school house presidents participated in “Superintendent for the Day”. On March 27, I had the pleasure of spending the day with four

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## SUPERINTENDENT MESSAGE *continued*

outstanding individuals: Ashna Jain and Brian Mitchell from DeMasi Middle School, and Erin St. John and Anton Smolyanyy from Marlton Middle School.

Our day started with a visit to Van Zant Elementary School to attend a first-grade Morning Meeting in Mrs. Stockl's classroom. Next, we spent time with Mrs. DiSibio's Kindergarten class at Rice Elementary School. We spent the remainder of the morning at the Administration Building meeting with the central office team to give the house presidents some insights as to what happens behind the scenes of a school district.

While at the Administration Building, the Superintendents for the Day were interviewed by reporter Zane Clark. Following

a morning of meetings, we had a nice lunch at Ragazzi. Students also were invited to attend the March 28 Board of Education Meeting and have the opportunity to sit with the superintendent and board members.

The district annually partners with Cherokee High School for its Senior Day of Service; we hosted more than 200 students from CHS who worked with our students and staff across the district on April 12.

Also in April, elementary schools across the district held annual Science Days to spotlight STEM learning. Students gained first-hand experiences and real-world connections in science.

Thanks to the PTA/Os, parents, and community members who volunteer to share their expertise.

As always, I encourage you to visit our school websites for more information on the various events taking place in our schools.

## 2019-2020 Budget Update

At the meeting on March 12, the Evesham Township Board of Education approved the tentative 2019-2020 school budget. This budget maintains all current instructional programs, sustains current class sizes, focuses on student achievement and enhances staff professional development.

Specific budget initiatives include an update to mathematics resources/materials, and the upgrade of technology hardware such as interactive whiteboards and security cameras. As a result of a significant reduction in state aid supporting our budget, there was a need for reduced spending on supplies, non-instructional equipment, and capital projects.

The Board held a public hearing and adopted the final 2019-2020 budget on May 2. The new school year begins on July 1, 2019.

## CURRICULUM

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R** The Evesham Township School District uses a balanced literacy approach for instruction in Language Arts. In keeping with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, our goal for literacy instruction is to develop a community of learners who value literacy and use it in

their everyday lives for a variety of purposes.

We view providing instruction in essential literacy strategies and exposing students to the many ways literacy enriches our lives, as an integral part of every student's daily experience in our schools. The literacy time block comprises five parts: Writer's Workshop, Guided Reading, Core Literature, Reader's Workshop and Word Study.

Although literacy instruction is taught daily throughout the entire school year, March is a special time where additional literacy celebrations occur across the district. The National Education Association (NEA) hosts an annual Read Across America (RAA) event, encouraging every child to read in honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday in early March. The project aims to promote literacy and increase

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## CURRICULUM

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awareness about the excitement of reading for all ages, both young and old.

**R** ETSD always takes part in this nationwide special event through a variety of literacy activities such as buddy readers that bridged from preschool through high school, special guest readers from the community, school-wide Drop Everything and Read minutes, and special morning meetings.

**N** In addition to RAA, some of the schools hold literacy weeks, theme-based literacy nights, and spring book fairs around this time. This year was another great year for our students and staff.



## DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

### SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

ETSD currently is registered through Sustainable Jersey for Schools and is undergoing the certification process during the 2018-2019 school year.

Energy conservation efforts and other green initiatives are undertaken in both the design and operation of all school facilities within the district and have been occurring for many years. Highlights from the many sustainable initiatives include solar projects, lighting retrofits, LED replacements, demand response shut-down, and more. Many initiatives not only bring in additional revenue, but also reduce spending in identified areas.

Students learn, beginning as early as Kindergarten, various green initiatives through lessons and interdisciplinary units of instruction. Assemblies and/or guest speakers also are brought in from time-to-time to cover an environmental topic. One big area includes a focus on recycling and composting.

In addition to learning in the classrooms what it means to compost and recycle, students also learn about their value to our planet. Students actually get to put into practice what they have learned, on a daily basis, in our cafeterias. Each school has a designated area where students delineate daily items that can be composted, items that can be recycled, and items that need to go in the actual trash. The district is in its fifth year of a successful composting program, where suitable materials

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## DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

### SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES

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from the cafeterias are composted as opposed to being diverted to landfills.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the district kept approximately 43 tons of material out of landfills by composting. In terms of recycling efforts, approximately 75.5 tons of recycling items such as papers, cardboard, bottles and cans were collected and sent to the Burlington County recycling facility for the 2018 year.

In addition to composting and recycling efforts, other student green initiatives and beautification projects occur at the schools through service learning, wellness initiatives, and science units of instruction.

Sustainability efforts also occur through a district-wide paperless initiative with parents, students and staff. A continued focus centers around the day-to-day usage of paper. This effort to use less paper not only reduces



district costs, but also positively impacts the environment. ETSD's paperless initiatives include items such as paperless Board meetings; electronic completion, submission, and approval of several frequently-used forms within the district; increased electronic communication with staff, parents, and the community; and email/paperless correspondence with state and county offices whenever possible.

# BEELER HIGHLIGHTS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

During the month of April, **Beeler School** recognized Autism Awareness Month. One of the fastest growing developmental disorders in the United States, Autism now effects approximately 1 in 59 children, making it more common than childhood cancer,

AIDS, and diabetes combined. With the addition of Erica Moon to the Beeler staff this year, the community has enhanced its recognition of the disorder.

Prior to teaching at Beeler, Mrs. Moon taught students with Autism for 15 years while

she was a teacher at Jaggard. However, her involvement goes much deeper. While she was in high school, Mrs. Moon had a younger cousin diagnosed with Autism. She was close to him and became very involved with his development. After graduating college with degrees in Education and Psychology, Mrs. Moon earned a master's degree in Autism and  
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# BEELER HIGHLIGHTS AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

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Behavior Disorders. Overall, she has 21 years of teaching experience working with students with Autism.

Mrs. Moon works closely with the Autism Speaks organization. Every year she and her team participate in the Autism Speaks for South Jersey Walk, which happens to be June 1 this year. Mrs. Moon also

organizes a Night Out for Autism, a fundraiser reaching out to the entire Evesham Township School District.

This year at Beeler, students and staff wore blue every Monday during the month of April. The students colored and decorated puzzle pieces, a highly recognized symbol for Autism Awareness, and displayed them in the main hallway. The

Beeler PTA sponsored a wristband sale, from which all proceeds will go towards Autism Speaks.

Students and staff have been exposed to a deeper understanding of Autism and how it effects so many children through many other activities within their classroom lessons, as well as some other whole school activities throughout the month. It has been a heart-warming learning experience for the entire Beeler community.



# KINDERGARTENERS KICK-OFF WELLNESS WEEK AT DEMASI

Kindergartens at **DeMasi Elementary School** hosted a school-wide morning meeting in March to kickoff School Wellness Week.

The students shared the essential traits of growth, optimism, persistence, flexibility, resilience and empathy. Kindergarten focused on persistence and showed the school a video clip from “Ormie the Pig” and how he overcame the obstacles to get a cookie jar that he so desperately wanted.

The students turned and talked with a partner to share a time that they showed persistence. Some examples included working hard to score a soccer goal or learning to ride a bike.

As a follow-up to the Kindergarteners’ meeting, each student was invited to write on a cookie about a time in their life when they showed persistence, and then these were displayed for all to see.



# PARENT-STUDENT BOOK CLUB SPURS CONVERSATION



The library in the evenings is usually a pretty quiet place, but that wasn't the case at **DeMasi Middle School**. The room was alive with spirited conversation between parents and children as they discussed life and the challenges of growing up.

The night was the culminating event of the parent-student book club in Mrs. Colnes' seventh-grade reading class. Each year, the students participate in a book club focusing on "coming of age books". Parents are invited to read the same book and talk about it at home. Parents and students also respond to questions on a class blog.

"There are countless studies detailing the benefits of parents/caregivers reading to children at

a young age, but these benefits also extend into middle and high school," explained Ms. Colnes. "Our hope is that reading together reinforces the importance of reading and motivates reluctant readers and hopefully makes reading more

enjoyable. An added benefit is that we hope it opens a dialogue between adults and children about the issues/choices facing adolescents as they move through middle school."

Each of the books ("The War with Grandpa", "The Outsiders", "Searching for David's Heart", and "Heart of a Champion") features an adolescent facing challenges as they grow up. Discussions centered around "what would you do" as well as the life lessons learned by the characters in the books. After everyone finished talking, parents and students worked together on a booklet of inspirational quotes that

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# PARENT-STUDENT BOOK CLUB SPURS CONVERSATION

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the students can read for motivation as they travel through their teenage years. Parents also brought some of their favorite quotes or a letter for their child.

Melissa Goida, who participated with her son, Kyle, said she loved everything about it.

“In today’s environment with all the electronics...phones, video gaming and social media, it’s wonderful for the parent/guardian/child/teachers to disengage from

that,” said Mrs. Goida. “This is an opportunity for the kids to see their parents interested at this age and

for communication to flow among them, and the blogging was such fun.”



# CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS



Friday, April 5, was a day filled with Scientific Fun and learning at **Jaggard Elementary**. The annual Science Expo was a huge success!

Jill Litz, PTA Coordinator, and Principal Maria Sobel worked together to ensure that each grade level had at least three presentations through which the classes rotated.

Through a combination of outside presenters such as Camp Creek Run, staff presenters, and parent presenters, students were able to experience a number of different things relevant to different science fields. For

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# CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS

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example, all in one morning, students in first-grade learned about sand volcanoes and made one that they could erupt, how to make healthy snacks such as apple cookies, and how to make play dough, which they got to bring home. In the fourth-grade, students were learning how to engineer dams, emergency medicine, and had a presentation on “Mindfulness and the Brain.”

New to Jaggard’s Science Expo this year, Mrs. Lisa DiGangi and her Stat Club from Marlton Middle School did two presentations. The club presented a hands-on Marine Biology activity to third-graders, and worked with fifth-graders on a Stem Challenge called Champ the Corgi. The middle school students were a hit and everyone enjoyed welcoming back some of Jaggard’s former students who went on to MMS!

The Day of Science did not end with the presentations! Students even had science infused into a sched-



uled break that day, watching science videos relevant to the curriculum at their grade level while they had snack.

In the afternoon there was an assembly for all of the students. Jaggard’s PTA treated the students to a presentation by the Franklin Institute entitled *Sound, Music, and Movement*. Jaggard would like to thank all those who helped in any way – large or small – to make this day happen! Hopefully, we sparked an interest in science for some of our students. Look out Albert Einstein!



# 2019 MES READ ACROSS AMERICA CELEBRATION

NEA (National Education Association) Read Across America is an annual reading motivation and awareness program celebrated in communities across the nation. Since 1998, NEA has designated the birthday of children's author, Dr. Seuss, as the day to bring reading excitement to children of all ages.

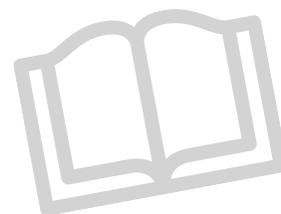
For the sixth year in a row that excitement continued with the **Marlton Elementary School** PTA coordinating the Scholastic Book Fair to coincide with the nationwide observance of Read Across America. Our PTA spearheaded the challenge of reading books for 30,000 minutes during this week-long celebration. Minutes were totaled each day by grade level and added to the "Truffella Tree Grove" in the cafeteria for all to see each day. The original goal was met after the second day, increasing the goal to 40,000.

The at-home challenge concluded with our Milk and Cookies Night on Friday March 1. A packed house of more than 400 students came dressed in their pajamas, and accompanied by their families, to

listen to stories read and performed by MES staff members. Ticketed sessions allowed children to choose two of their favorite readings. Afterwards the throng proceeded to the cafeteria where they were treated to milk and cookies and awaited the final announcement of the Reading Challenge. The Evesham Library had a representative to sign-up students and families for a free library card AND they could choose a free book from their book cart. What a treat for all!

The Book Fair remained open throughout the evening for all to browse and buy. The evening concluded with a special performance of students and staff "MES Whalers Ukulele Club."

Congratulations to all our students for a job well done! YES! The children read for **51,609 minutes**.



# DROP EVERYTHING AND WALK

As part of **Marlton Elementary's** Wellness Week Celebration, the school held a "Health Walk." On Monday, March 11, at 1:40 PM, the entire school dropped everything and walked.

Mrs. Perocho, the school wellness coordinator, created a "walk" course as the children exited the front door

of the school. Each grade had a specific goal for the number of loops they were to complete, starting with one loop for Kindergarten, up to six loops for fifth-graders. This was a wonderful activity to kick off the celebration of Wellness Week!



# MMS WELCOMES SENIORS TO DESSERT THEATRE

Each year, senior citizens from the Marlton community gather at **Marlton Middle School** to attend the Senior Citizen Dessert Theatre. This year, more than two hundred seniors attended the event.

Arriving at the school, seniors were greeted by eighth-grade MMS students and treated to a variety of desserts and refreshments, along

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# MMS WELCOMES SENIORS TO DESSERT THEATRE

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with entertainment. Students from Marlton Elementary School and DeMasi Middle School performed songs, instrumental pieces, and dance numbers to the delight of the seniors.

This event has a rich history, beginning 35 years ago. Many senior citizens look forward to it because they love the entertainment and, more importantly, their interactions with MMS eighth-grade students. One senior citizen praised, "We come to the event for the kids. The kids are so polite, they make you feel at home and they can't wait to serve you." The

students acted as commendable hosts, giving seniors raffle tickets upon entry, helping them find a seat, and serving them food and refreshments.

Eighth-grader Olivia Fortuna was elated to be a part of this event.

"My favorite part was talking with all of the lovely men and women there! To hear about their passions and interests, and what made them excited was very heartwarming."

Another student echoed Fortuna's thoughts, "I volunteered because I love the rewarding feeling of making other people light-up or smile!"

Cindy Esposito, secretary to

superintendent John Scavelli, is the coordinator of this annual event. Esposito plans with the senior center and organizes the entertainment, food, and gift cards. Community members, staff, and teachers also pull together to donate five-dollar gift cards to places like McDonalds, Wawa, CVS, and Shoprite, as well as to provide cakes, cookies, pies, and a variety of other desserts.

Based on this generosity, each senior citizen was able to leave the event with a hand-decorated goodie bag created by children at the Teddy Bear Academy, district-wide elementary school students, as well as middle school Renaissance students. The bags were filled with treats, cookies, pens, and a letter from seventh-grade MMS science teacher, Ms. Lorraine Busa, who has been involved with the Senior Citizen Dessert Theatre event for many years. She is the public face and voice of the event and works closely with the student volunteers, helping them prepare for the event and providing them with helpful tips.

"I love seeing the interactions of the kids and the seniors and how much they learn from each other," said Busa. In a time when adolescents and public education often are portrayed in a negative light, outreach events like these forge new relationships and perceptions. Busa concurs, "This event is a great way for the senior citizens to see the goodness in the public school system."



# RICE SCIENCE FAIR WOWED!

Student scientists at **Rice School** wowed their classmates with amazing entries during the recent Science Fair.

Hosted by the Rice Elementary PTA, the evening Science Fair followed a full day of hands-on assemblies during which students explored topics involving life science, physics, chemistry, technology and more. Laser light shows, Star Lab lessons, live animals and insects, and “green” initiatives, as well as health and fitness challenges, helped students extend their understanding of science concepts.

Without a doubt, the highlight of the day was the opportunity for students to share their own projects

with the school community. Some worked independently, while others researched and conducted experiments with friends, siblings or family members. All created outstanding displays and spoke informatively about their chosen topics. Many connected their learning to this year’s school theme, “Choose Kind”, explaining, for example, how science can be used to improve the environment or improve the lives of those with physical challenges.

This annual event helps students see connections to science across disciplines and inspires them to think about the role science plays in their lives every day.



# VZ IS GOING GREEN!

**Van Zant Elementary** held its first Green Week beginning on April 29! Green Week included conservation challenges for students and families, information on the daily announcements, an electricity-free afternoon, upcycling in art, and a nature walk around the school yard. This event was organized by Van Zant's first Green Team. The team, which first met this January, is made up of third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders.

VZ's Green Team identified three

main goals for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year: replacing plastic utensils in the cafeteria with reusable utensils, reducing the number of plastic water bottles thrown away by getting water bottle filling stations, and replacing paper towels with hand dryers in the bathrooms.

VZ has been using reusable metal utensils in the cafeteria since March. A water bottle filling station also has been installed and, as of April 17, close to three thousand

throw-away water bottles have been saved from landfills. The team is in its final weeks of a reusable water bottle sale to raise money for another water bottle filling station.

The Green Team will spend the remainder of the school year focusing on getting hand dryers in student bathrooms to reduce paper towel waste. Go Green!

If you would like to support the efforts to go green at VZ please [purchase](#) a reusable water bottle.

